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THE FAILURE OF US ATTEMPTS  
TO ATTAIN SUPREMACY OF THE ETHER

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In accordance with international agreements, all countries register the frequencies used by them with the Bern bureau of the International Communications Union, which regularly publishes a list of frequencies so used.

World War II made great changes in the state of radio communications in many countries. The 1947 Radio Communications Conference reallocated frequency bands for various services (stationary, air, sea, broadcasting, etc.) and passed a resolution calling for a new international list for frequency distribution, taking into consideration the requirements of each country and service.

For this purpose, a Provisional Frequency Bureau was created, composed of delegated and experts from 57 countries. It began work in Geneva in January 1948. Its main object was to prepare a draft of new international frequencies from 14 to 27,500 kilocycles.

If all delegations had been willing to cooperate, this difficult problem could have been solved. However, from the very first days of the conference, the US put pressure on countries dependent upon her in an attempt to obtain passage of an allocation plan which would give the US supremacy of the ether.

The US delegation tried to mask its insolent pretensions by prating about "improving the utilization of the frequency spectrum," "preparing a list on scientific and technical principles," etc. However, there was no ambiguity in the practical proposals introduced by US delegates to further the imperialistic aims of the US.

They insisted on a complete redistribution of frequencies, allocating them not, as heretofore, by individual stations but by assigning to each radio communications line a minimum set of frequencies selected on the basis of "average" data, without regard for ionospheric variations. Their claims, amounting to four times the prewar requirements of the US, aptly illustrate their desire for world domination.

- 1 -

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Delegations from the USSR, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Rumania, and Albania opposed these claims as contrary to the interests of many nations. The USSR delegation also exposed the unscientific nature of the US proposals on the distribution of frequencies for communications purposes.

It is well known that, in addition to daytime and seasonal changes in the ionosphere, there are also variations, due to its own climatic peculiarities, which at times affect nearly 50 percent of the operating time. It is clear, therefore, that most radio communications lines cannot be limited to a minimum frequency range based on a standard pattern, and that reliable communications can only be ensured by allocating frequencies to radio stations through the existing arrangement and by manipulating them according to the varying conditions of the ionosphere. The US claims would deprive many countries of the flexibility required for assuring reliable communications.

The Soviet delegation also pointed out that the US claims were inadmissible, since they contravened the right of every country to manage its own internal affairs, including the selection of frequency bands.

To facilitate compilation of a new frequency list, the Soviet delegates proposed using the 1939 Bern list as a basis and adding necessary changes for further allocations to services while preserving the existing registration in full. The proposal was seconded by the people's democracies, who understood the Soviet reasoning.

Seeing that they could not answer the Soviet arguments, and that their real aims had been unmasked, the US delegation made use of the notorious machinery of the vote and of its "mechanical" majority to have the Soviet plan rejected and the US proposals accepted.

Six months later, however, the Provisional Frequency Bureau (whose activities cost the International Communications Union about 3 million Swiss francs) had to admit that it was impossible to prepare a draft on the basis of the US proposals. Nevertheless, the US forced the bureau to continue its work, with the aim of collecting valuable information about the location of radio communication points in various countries.

Since it was apparent that the bureau was becoming a US office, the delegates from the USSR and the people's democracies decided to abandon the bureau. Other delegates also decided to leave. The US delegates then had the conference officially closed and tried without success to gain supremacy by behind-the-scene bargaining. Responsibility for the collapse of this important project lies with the USA and the Anglo-US bloc. The inglorious history of the Provisional Frequency Bureau shows that an international list can be compiled only by taking into consideration the national interests of all member countries of the International Communications Union.

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- 2 -

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